

## So You Think You Can Work in Communications Security (COMSEC)?

### June 14

In 1956, Paul Neff was appointed the first civilian Assistant Director of Communications Security (A/DIR CSEC) by Director of the National Security Agency (DIRNSA), General Ralph Canine. On a mission to quickly turn the upstart NSA into a professional organization, General Canine, not known for his patience, grew annoyed waiting for the military services to identify acceptable candidates to succeed the first A/DIR CSEC, Colonel Frank Herrelko, who held the post from 1953-1955. At the time a tour at NSA was not generally viewed as a career enhancing assignment for someone seeking to make his mark in the military.



*General Canine shaking hands with Paul Neff*

Growing impatient with the delay in receiving acceptable candidates, General Canine set a deadline for the military to provide him a list of acceptable candidates from which to choose. When the deadline came without an acceptable candidate, the DIRNSA appointed NSA civilian Paul Neff (Colonel Herrelko's former

deputy A/DIR CSEC) to the position. Neff would remain in the position from 1956 until 1962, and it has been held by an NSA civilian ever since.

In 1960 Mr. Neff issued a memorandum to CSEC with a list of characteristics he felt best represented "... the more important qualities in any professional man." Neff's list was intended to encourage CSEC to assume the characteristics of a professional workforce and set the ethos of the world-class organization that would follow. Neff's list of nine professional qualities included:

1. A desire to investigate
2. The ability to distinguish the important considerations

3. Ingenuity and resourcefulness
4. Technical skill and knowledge
5. Desire for self-improvement
6. A sense of responsibility
7. High standards of performance
8. Integrity
9. Facility in oral and written expression

The foundation for professional competence within the CSEC organization, inherited and acknowledged by its many organizational descendants through the years, can be traced to Neff's vision. Although some of the terminology used in 1960 may have changed, these characteristics of a professional remain as relevant to NSA's mission and workforce today as they were 59 years ago.

(U) 502 caption: LTG Ralph Canine, USA, in his office, shaking hands with Paul Neff, who is wearing a snazzy tie.